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# INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDIES.

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PREPARED BY

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## THIRTY-FIRST STUDY.—THE PROPHECY OF MICAH.

[The material of this "study" is furnished by Professor Burroughs. It is edited by Professor Harper.]

### I. PRELIMINARY NOTES.

1. The Book of Micah resembles in many particulars that of Hosea. It is a summary of an extended prophetic activity in Judah, while the Book of Hosea summarizes a lengthy ministry in Israel. Like Hosea, it is abrupt in its transitions, sharp in its contrasts, abundant in its imagery, often obscure in its details. Like Hosea, it also commingles, in a striking manner, severity and tenderness. For these reasons, its comprehension appears, at the outstart, difficult to the student. But patient labor in its study will meet a sure reward. Its unity, as an organic whole, is much more marked than in the case of Hosea.
2. The prophet Micah was the contemporary of Isaiah. These two, laboring together in Judah, in the Assyrian period, have much in common in their historical situation, in their mission, in their ideas and their expression of them. The study of the prophecy of either casts much light upon that of the other. Particularly does the prophecy of Isaiah, because of its greater fullness, illustrate and light up that of Micah. In all probability the latter leaned not a little upon the former, and was largely influenced by him.
3. The peculiar glory of the Book of Micah is its Messianic prophecy, especially that regarding the person of the Messiah. In the description of the Ruler from Bethlehem the book finds its culmination. The positive, explicit and personal character of its Messianic prediction places the Book of Micah in a central position in the development of prophecy in Judah.

### II. THE BIBLICAL LESSON.\*

1. *Read, slowly and thoughtfully*, in the Revision, the Book of Micah, and endeavor to grasp its general and leading thoughts. Consider the following questions:
  - (1) Where do you find *marked* breaks or transitions in the thought of the book? Into what larger sections would you divide it, by means of these breaks, for convenience in study?
  - (2) What less important transitions do you discover in these larger divisions? How would you subdivide them into smaller portions?
  - (3) Having indicated those portions of the book which contain *denunciation*, and also those portions which present *consolation*, *hope*, or *promise*, how do

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\* The following literature may be consulted: Delitzsch, "Messianic Prophecies," § 44; "O. T. Hist. of Redemption," § 57; von Orelli, "O. T. Prophecy," pp. 305-311; Briggs, "Messianic Prophecy," pp. 180, 181, 216-219; Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," vol. 4, pp. 351-368; Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, "Micah," T. K. Cheyne; Pusey, "Minor Prophets," Keil and Delitzsch, Minor Prophets, "Micah," C. F. Keil; Lange's Com., "Micah," Paul Kleinert and George R. Bliss; Smith's Bible Dict., "Micah."

these divisions stand related, in general, to those previously made? Having compared the two, arrange the former with reference to the latter, considered as major divisions.

2. *Re-read* chs. 1 and 2, and consider the following matters :

- (1) Does judgment or mercy preponderate? Portions devoted to each?
- (2) Omitting the superscription, (a) how many verses are occupied with a threat of punishment? (b) How is the judgment of Jehovah represented? (c) What are the leading figures employed? (d) What is the cause of Jehovah's self-manifestation in judgment? (e) What is the special sentence against Samaria? (f) What is the relation of Samaria's sin and sentence to the general message of the book?
- (3) (a) Which remaining verses of ch. 1 contain the prophet's lamentation, together with its cause? (b) Whom has the prophet in view in this portion of the chapter? (c) What is the form of his lament? (d) What lies before the seer's eye in vs. 10-16? Compare Isa. 10:28-32. (e) What use does the prophet make, in this description of the invading Assyrian army, of the signification of the names of places spoken of? Why would this be more impressive to his Hebrew hearers than to us? (f) In what section of the country were these places located? (g) How is the prophet's sympathy thus particularly aroused? See v. 14. (h) Have we an allusion to this invasion in Isa. 20:1 (cf. Isa. 10:5 seq.)? (i) With what address is the lament closed (v. 16)?
- (4) Analyze ch. 2 as follows: (a) The sin causing Jehovah's judgment, and the punishment corresponding to it. (b) The reply to the words of the false prophets (cf. Amos 2:12; 5:10; Isa. 30:9,10). (c) The sin of the people again spoken of. (d) The character of the false prophecy. (e) The prophet's word of hope. Indicate the verses which belong to these sections, severally. Does any other analysis suggest itself to you as preferable?
- (5) Read carefully vs. 12,13. (a) Meaning of "Jacob"? "the breaker"? Who is "their king"? What is the figure here? (b) The general thought? (c) Does a careful consideration of the passage seem to favor the view that we have here a sample prediction of one of the false prophets or, by a sudden transition, an utterance of promise on the part of Micah?

3. *Re-read* chs. 3-5. Consider the following questions:

- (1) How may ch. 3 be divided into three parts, (a) giving an account of the evil conduct of the nobility and their judgment, (b) announcing the punishment of the false prophets and its character, (c) describing the sins of the leaders of the people and the ruin which will be visited upon Zion as the result?
- (2) (a) What is the figure employed in (a)? (b) What condition of society is described in this chapter? (c) How does the prophet, in connection with the preceding chapters, emphasize the relation between idolatry, together with the decadence of spiritual religion, and social corruption? Cf., in this regard, Amos, Hosea, Joel. (d) What city is viewed as the centre of this corruption? (e) With what class of the people does the prophet show himself in close sympathy? How is this readily explained?
- (3) (a) What picture is given us, in (b) and (c), of the religious condition of the nation, particularly of the capital? (b) Meaning of "prepare war" (v. 5)? "Build up Zion with blood" (v. 10)? "Lean upon the LORD" (v. 11)? Compare v. 12 with Jer. 26:16-19 and 2 Kgs. 18:4 seq. (c) From this comparison, when do you locate the condition of religious affairs described in this chapter?

4. Make a special study of the Messianic prophecies of chs. 4, 5, in the following manner:

- (1) Consider the prediction of 4:1-4. (a) Compare Isa. 2:1-4.\* (b) Meaning of "in the latter days"? "established in the top of the mountains"? Is the idea here presented that of a physical transformation, so that the temple-mount will be visible to all nations? See Zech. 14:10; Ezek. 40:2. Is the prediction, therefore, symbolic in form? (c) What are the blessings that go forth from Jehovah to the nations? What is the result of these changed conditions? (d) What is the relation of v. 5 to vs. 1-4? Have we here a reversion, in the prophet's mind, to the existing situation of his time?
  - (2) Consider the portion 4:6,7. (a) Meaning of "in that day"? Compare 2:12; also Isa. 24:23; Zeph. 3:19. (b) What is the general sense of the passage?
  - (3) Consider the prediction 4:8-13. Compare Amos 9:11-15, also Joel 3:9-14. (a) Meaning of "tower of the flock"? cf. 2:12. (b) Do we find in vs. 9, 10 the punishment from which Zion shall be led forth purified? (c) Is the representation in vs. 11-13 symbolical? Does any other explanation appear preferable?
  - (4) Consider the prediction of ch. 5. (a) What is the thought in v. 1? Does this verse go with what precedes or what follows? How far is your interpretation influenced by this preference? (b) Meaning of "daughter of troops"? *Whose* "troops"? Of Judah or of her enemies? Meaning of "whose going-forth," etc. (v. 2)? cf. 7:14,15,20; also Amos 9:11; Hosea 6:3. "She which travaileth" (v. 3)? cf. Is. 7:14. "They shall abide" (v. 4)? cf. 4:4; also Amos 9:15; Joel 3:20. "*Our* peace" (v. 5)? cf. Is. 9:6; Zech. 9:9,10. (c) What is the twofold destiny of Israel in relation to the nations? See vs. 7,8, "dew from the LORD;" "as a lion," etc. (d) What shall be the character of the life of the Messianic kingdom, in contrast with existing evils? see vs. 10-15. (e) How far does the prophet appear to be influenced, in the form of his utterance, by the thought of the first and simple Davidic kingdom? see also 4:8.
  - (5) As the result of the above study, summarize, in its essential statements and characteristics, the Messianic prophecy of Micah.
5. *Re-read* chs. 6, 7.
- (1) Analyze ch. 6, as follows: (a) The announcement of Jehovah's controversy with his people; (b) the plea of Jehovah; (c) the inquiry of Jehovah's people as to the method by which he may be propitiated; (d) Jehovah's reply through his prophet; (e) Jehovah's denunciation, because of the lack of conformity to his requirements.
  - (2) Analyze ch. 7, as follows: (a) The lamentation of the true Israel; (b) her confidence in Jehovah; (c) the prophetic announcement of blessing after judgment; (d) the prophet's prayer; (e) Jehovah's answer; (f) the conclusion of triumph; (g) the conclusion of praise because of the divine mercy.
  - (3) Compare these chs. (6, 7) with Hosea ch. 14. See "study" twenty-four, II. 4. (3).
6. That you may have in condensed and permanent form the result of your work upon the Book of Micah, (1) write out a short summary of each chapter; (2) unify the thought and state, as briefly as possible, the scope of the teaching of the book as a whole.

### III. SPECIAL TOPICS.

1. **The Prophet Micah; his Date; his Peculiar Characteristics.** (1) Signification of the prophet's name? see 7:17b, seq., specially v. 18. Inference to be drawn from his name regarding the religious character of his parentage? How is he distinguished from the prophet mentioned in 1 Kgs. 22:8 seq.?

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\* For a consideration of the question whether Isaiah or Micah was the original author of this prediction or whether both have quoted it from some earlier prophet, see the commentaries and introductions.

- Where was Moresheth (1:1,14)? (2) How extended was the prophet's activity, as regards time, if the superscription (1:1) be accepted? Its longest duration? Its shortest? By what dates would you relatively indicate the commencement and close of this activity? Is any difficulty regarding this extended activity to be inferred from Jer. 26:18,19? (3) From your study of the book of his prophecy what do you consider to have been Micah's marked personal characteristics?
- 2. The Style of the Prophet.** What of his use of irony, paronomasia, bold interrogation? What of his figures of speech? Whence derived? see 1:8; 2:12; 5:4,5,7,8; 7:14, also 1:6; 3:12; 4:3,4,12,13; 6:15; 7:1,4. How far may we see in these the impress of his surroundings and habits of life? What as to his rhythm? His diction?
- 3. Comparisons with other Prophets.** (1) In what respects, citing passages, would you compare him with Amos? (2) With Hosea? (3) In what respects find similarity to Isaiah? in what respects contrasts with that prophet? What influence of Isaiah upon Micah would you note after a study of both prophets?\*

### THIRTY-SECOND STUDY.—THE PROPHECY OF NAHUM.

[The material of this "study" is furnished by Professor Burroughs. It is edited by Professor Harper.]

#### I. PRELIMINARY NOTES.

1. The prophecy of Nahum finds its place at the close of the activity of Isaiah and Micah. It fittingly concludes the prophecy of the Assyrian period in Judah. Taking its stand upon the character of Jehovah, it emphasizes his justice toward the heathen world-power, as represented in Assyrian Nineveh. The character of Jehovah must condition his attitude and action toward the heathen, as well as toward Israel-Judah. Herein is found hope and comfort for his people.
2. The comparatively recent explorations in the East, uncovering the site and bringing to light the contemporary history of this heathen capital, together with the continued advance in Assyrian researches, cannot but render the study of this book peculiarly interesting and instructive. Nineveh, uncovered from her mounds, stands before us as she was in the days of the prophet. Thus "the Bible and the Monuments" are mutually interpreting one another.
3. The attention of the student is particularly called to the Book of Nahum as a specimen of Hebrew literature. Those who are interested in the literary study of the Bible may well devote themselves to a careful consideration of the form of this book. Such as can, even with effort, read it in the original, should endeavor to do so. Its striking beauties, however, may be quite thoroughly comprehended by a study of the English text of the Revision, aided by the suggestions of an appreciative student of the Hebrew.†

\* The following list of passages for comparison is taken, with alteration, from Cheyne's "Micah," Introd. p. 12; Micah 2:1,2 with Isa. 5:8; Micah 2:6,11 with Isa. 30:9-11; 28:7; Micah 2:12; 4:7 with Isa. 10:20,21; Micah 3:5-7 with Isa. 29:9-12; Micah 3:12 with Isa. 32:14; Micah 5:2,3 with Isa. 7:14; Micah 5:5 with Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:9-15 with Isa. 2:6-21; Micah 6:6-8 with Isa. 1:11-17; Micah 7:7 with Isa. 8:17; Micah 7:12 with Isa. 11:11, etc.

† Particular attention is called to the *Hebrew* (now *O. T.*) *Student* for October, 1882, containing the Hebrew text of Nahum, with translation of the same, together with translation of the Septuagint, Targum and Vulgate texts, the work of the "translating committee" of the exegetical class of the Hebrew Summer School of 1882. The form of the book is well brought out by Kleinert, Lange's Com., "Nahum." Consult also the literature given below.